

THAT MAN OF STYLE

Valets and Valeting are Now
the Proper Thing.

AMERICAN APEING OF ENGLISH

Englishmen Filling the Field Here--The
Dunes of a Valet Carefully Set
Forth in Detail.



NOTHING in English society has taken a firmer hold on the fashionable world of the American bachelor than the system of employing a valet. Every bachelor man-of-fashion must have one nowadays. No swell bachelor's outfit is complete without one. The valet is English throughout, too, not even the French pronunciation is tolerated. If you are talking to a young and rich bachelor do not speak about his or your "valet." If he reply at all it will be only to emphasize the fact that "valet" is the way all "proper" folks pronounce it.

Anyone who has followed the fashions the past ten, or, the past five, years must be aware of the extensive development of the valet vogue. A list of those who are thus served would include about every bachelor of social rank in the city. "Social rank" is said advisedly, for it is not a question of wealth. On the contrary if you are a rising young society bachelor without great wealth at your command, don't imagine that you are therefore cut off from the luxury of a valet, nor need you fear that well-bred people will ridicule you for going beyond your income. Men of experience in the highest grades of society would advise you no doubt to take a valet as a measure of economy. Of course this is not just the way the world looks at a valet; there is a common opinion that a valet is a convenient means adopted by young bloods to run through their income, but such a view is not shared by any society man with a wide horizon.

No one could select a better judge than Elisha Dyer, whose graceful form and handsome face have been conspicuous at every entertainment of note for



A SWELL IN BUSINESS SUIT, RECEPTION AND DRESS SUIT.

years back. The economy lies in the saving of clothes, according to Mr. Dyer. "Looking at the question in no other light," said he, "it would not be a bad idea for a bachelor to lay aside thirty dollars or forty dollars a month for a valet. He will find that in ten years, even though he be a fine dresser, his expense for clothes will not be over two thousand dollars. Clothes wear better when constantly looked after, pressed thoroughly, and the stitch in time that saves nine attended to."

"In the matter of cravats alone, think what a delight it is always to have them properly ironed smooth. How long a supply of ties will last under the skillful touch of a valet, no one knows who has not been served by one. The expenses that are continually falling upon a bachelor from not having the proper thing ready when wanted, necessitating an immediate purchase, are offset by the services of a valet. These are the expenses and annoyances, by the way, that so many bachelors flee into matrimony to avoid. They think that the motto 'a place for everything and everything in its place' is the adjunct of domesticity alone. The bachelor, however, who has an intelligent valet, can have as well-ordered a 'home' as a man with the most domestic of wives."

The salary of a valet is not a great strain on a fairly well-filled purse. It amounts to about what is paid for club service. It ranges between thirty and fifty dollars, which does not include board. Mr. Elisha Dyer has the cutest valet in the city, to whom he pays twenty dollars per month and "finds" him. This valet is, however, unique. He is a quick-witted Jap. Mr. Dyer picked up years ago in San Francisco and has now become an adept in all that pertains to valetism. His name is Katsu, and this oriental cognomen is familiar to that wide circle of entertainers to which Mr. Dyer has access. It has got so that Mr. Dyer without Katsu is unthinkable. Katsu has worked up ideas of independence quite American in their broad breeziness.

"In fact," said Mr. Dyer, naively, "he kindly permits me to go out occasionally."

But it is only a valet who has a racial uniqueness and who knows it who would so presume on the salary he gets. Some valets, however, make snug little sums by serving half a dozen masters, each of whom pays him ten dollars a month for his services. The employers may be strangers to each other and may in fact not know that the valet has this large clientele. It makes no difference to the valet, who says he will perform his duties for a certain stipend. This service differs from Katsu's, taking him as a specimen of the permanent class. Instead of be-

ing always at beck and call, this part-time valet arranges special hours. He will come to you for his matutinal labors at a certain hour, stays there until he must go to Mr. Smith, and thus go the rounds. If you are not ready for him so much the worse for you.

Other valets have outside revenues, but they are not many, and those who touch fifty dollars per month would probably object to being called valets. The calling of valeting is now securely fastened to the social life of the metropolitan bachelor. The word "valeting" is now everywhere employed to comprehend all the duties of that line of service. Salaries, however, do not go up. They are falling a little, if anything, and the bachelor of to-day can have all the glory of a valet for far less than he could have obtained it five years ago. The pool or combination valet is a late feature, and this keeps down the expensiveness as does the steady arrival of English valets who have heard of the field here, and who come to work it in the belief, sentimentally expressed by a society man, "that their pay is surer here."

The American man of fashion has discovered during the few years in which the custom of valetism has become part of his daily life that the best servant to him is the trained English



ELISHA DYER AND HIS JAPANESE VALET, KATSU.

"second man." Men of other nationalities seek positions in vain now, and the best recommendation a valet can bring with him is a butler's note saying that he was in the employ of Sir Somebody or Lord Somebody, and that his work was to the satisfaction of the nobleman.

The English valet knows his position. The French and the German valet are exclusive and will not go beyond certain limits in their work. The Englishman is trained to serve as a waiter at dinner if there is call for his services at the country home in which his employer happens to be staying. He is exceedingly dutiful and not obsequious. There are a few southern men in New York who keep colored servants in the position of valets, but no northern man of fashion would think of engaging one. There are no reasonable objections in this matter for the colored valet will work for less and will perhaps work longer and more industriously than his white brother servant; yet it is not English, you know, to engage one of them, and so "George" must confine his service to opening doors in fashionable residences and at swell clubs.

There are now in New York perhaps two hundred English valets, most of whom have served the nobility across the ocean. One of the most fashionable men in New York has in his employ Herbert Lykins, who was the valet of Sir Charles Dilke for at least five years.

Edwin Gould has a notable English valet in the person of the man who served a young English duke until a year ago, when he came to America with the best of references and went directly to the service here.

Not every man of fashion is aware of what is in style and what is not in style when accepting an invitation to a country home about New York, at least with reference to the valet. As a rule bear in mind that the valet is not wanted. You are invited, not he, and unless the invitation is explicit on this point no valet should be taken.

When the guest reaches the country palace, whose hospitality he is to enjoy for a few days, he will find a servant at hand to do all the work that his valet is accustomed to perform for him.

There is a reason for this difference between the American and English custom. In the former the home is not as large and as roomy as the magnificent palaces of English noblemen. There it is the custom to be accompanied by the valet, who in turn takes a place among the servants at the hall and follows the orders of the butler or steward without a question. He waits upon table if asked and devotes all his leisure time to carrying out the orders of the chief servant of the place.

In the American country home it has become the custom to appoint a valet for three or four of the bachelors invited. When the guest comes home from his afternoon drive he finds his reception clothes laid out for him just as they would be if he were at home. His bath is turned on in the morning, his clothes are pressed and his spotless linen lies ready for use near his bed just as though he were at home and enjoying the services of his own valet.

When you are traveling on business it is perhaps wise to be accompanied by your valet, provided you are a man of fashion and can afford to keep one in your pay. Elisha Dyer never travels without his Japanese servant. The cutting boys are always valeted in proper shape when they travel. So is Crichton Webb.

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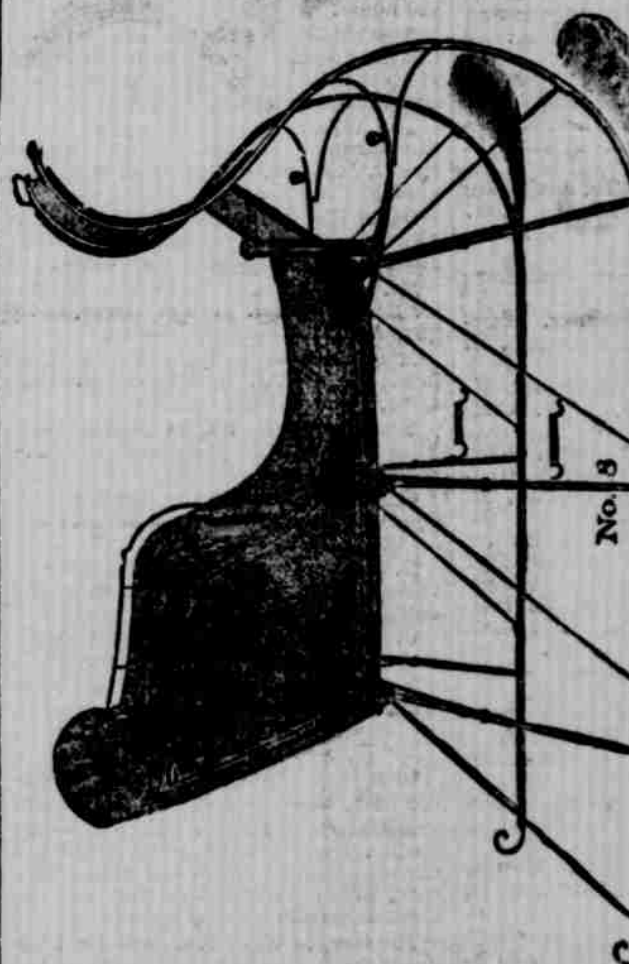
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